

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing payment products, the method comprising the steps of:
 - receiving a mail item comprising a payment product at a mail facility;
 - identifying a routing code associated with the mail item;
 - routing the mail item to a payment processing system, based at least in part on the routing code;
 - at the payment processing system, extracting the payment product from the mail item;
 - electronically transmitting payment data associated with the payment product to an intended recipient for processing; and
 - destroying the payment product at the payment processing system ~~wherein the payment processing system and the mail facility are local.~~
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the routing code comprises a zip code.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the routing code comprises one or more of an address, a post office box identifier, and a tracking code.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the routing code comprises a combination of numbers and letters.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the payment processing system is located at the mail facility.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the payment data comprises a portion of the payment product that is scanned for electronic transmission.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the payment data comprises a scanned image of the payment product.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein one or more items associated with the payment product are electronically transmitted with the payment product.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the one or more items comprise one or more of remittance advice, a coupon, a statement and accounts receivable data.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the intended recipient identifies a payment type based on the payment data.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the intended recipient further determines an appropriate clearing path, based at least in part on the payment type.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the appropriate clearing path comprises one or more of automated clearing house, image replacement document and image exchange channels.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the mail item is not sent into a regular mail channel.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the payment product comprises one or more of of ~~or~~ a consumer check, corporate check, cashier check, and money order.

15. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented system for processing payment products, the computer implemented system comprising:

a mail module that receives a mail item comprising a payment product at a mail facility, identifies a routing code associated with the mail item; and routes the mail item based at least in part on the routing code; and

a payment processing system that receives the mail item, extracts the payment product from the mail item; electronically transmits payment data associated with the payment product to

an intended recipient for processing; and destroys the payment product at the payment processing system ~~wherein the payment processing system and the mail facility are local.~~

16. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the routing code comprises a zip code.

17. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the routing code comprises one or more of an address, a post office box identifier, and a tracking code.

18. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the routing code comprises a combination of numbers and letters.

19. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the payment processing system is located at the mail facility.

20. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the payment data comprises a portion of the payment product that is scanned for electronic transmission.

21. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the payment data comprises a scanned image of the payment product.

22. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein one or more items associated with the payment product are electronically transmitted with the payment product.

23. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein the one or more items comprise one or more of remittance advice, a coupon, a statement and accounts receivable data.

24. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the intended recipient identifies a payment type based on the payment data.

25. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the intended recipient further determines an appropriate clearing path, based at least in part on the payment type.

26. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the appropriate clearing path comprises one or more of automated clearing house, image replacement document and image exchange channels.

27. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the mail item is not sent into a regular mail channel.

28. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 15, wherein the payment product comprises one or more of ~~or~~ a consumer check, corporate check, cashier check, and money order.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture for check processing comprising:
at least one processor readable medium~~carrier~~; and
instructions stored ~~carried~~ on the at least one medium~~carrier~~;
wherein the instructions are configured to be readable from the at least one medium~~carrier~~ by at least one processor and thereby cause the at least one processor to operate so as to:
receive a mail item comprising a payment product at a mail facility;
identify a routing code associated with the mail item;
route the mail item to a payment processing system, based at least in part on the routing code;
at the payment processing system, extract the payment product from the mail item;
electronically transmit payment data associated with the payment product to an intended recipient for processing; and

destroy the payment product at the payment processing system ~~wherein the payment processing system and the mail facility are local.~~

32. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the mail facility is a local post office and the payment processing system is within or proximate to the local post office.

33. (New) The system of claim 15, wherein the mail facility is a local post office and the payment processing system is within or proximate to the local post office.

34. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 31, wherein the mail facility is a local post office and the payment processing system is within or proximate to the local post office.